

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 MCT-01 ACDA-12 USSS-00 SY-05

IO-13 AID-05 A-01 OPR-02 COME-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /103 W

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FM AMEMBASSY VIENNA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4342

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AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

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E.O. 11652; N/A

TAGS: PINS, ASEC, GW, AU

SUBJECT: RAF-AUSTRIAN LINKS IN PALMERS KIDNAPPING

REF: A) VIENNA 9827, B) VIENNA 9836

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN PALMERS KIDNAPPING (REFTEL A), THANKS TO CAPTURE BY SWISS OF TWO AUSTRIANS WITH PART OF RANSOM MONEY, REFLECT LITTLE CREDIT ON COMPETENCE AND CAPABILITY OF LEADERS OF AUSTRIAN ULTRA-LEFTISTS WHO GOT INVOLVED AND HAVE, FOR NOW AT LEAST, EMBARRASSED AUSTRIAN AUTHORITIES. SWISS ACTION HAS REVEALED LINKS BETWEEN FRG'S BAADER-MEINHOF/RED ARMY FACTION (RAF) GROUPS AND AUSTRIAN RADICALS IN KIDNAPPING AND THOROUGHLY DISCREDITED RAF SYMPATHIZERS

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AMONG AUSTRIA'S SMALL AND FRACTIOUS ULTRA-LEFT ORGANIZATIONS. CONSERVATIVE OPPOSITION IS MAKING MOST OF SITUATION IN PARLIAMENT BUT TO LITTLE SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL EFFECT. END SUMMARY.

2. CAPTURE BY SWISS POLICE OF TWO PROMINENT YOUNG AUSTRIAN ULTRA-LEFTISTS WITH 2 MILLION OF 31 MILLION

SCHILLING RANSOM PAID FOR RELEASE OF AUSTRIAN MILLIONAIRE WALTER PALMERS (REFTL A), HAS BROKEN PALMERS KIDNAPPING CASE WIDE OPEN AND, CONTRARY TO EARLIER CONTENTION OF GOA AUTHORITIES, REVEALED DIRECT LINK BETWEEN FRG'S BAADER-MEINHOF/RAF GROUPS AND YOUNG ULTRA-LEFTISTS IN AUSTRIA. DETAINEES IN SWITZERLAND, THOMAS GRATT AND OTHMAR KEPLINGER, ARE MEMBERS OF STUDENT COUNCIL OF VIENNA UNIVERSITY THEATER ARTS INSTITUTE WHO WERE ELECTED ON SO-CALLED "LILI" (LINKE LISTE) COALITION OF VARIOUS ULTRA-LEFT FACTIONS. ACCORDING TO SOCIALIST "ARBEITER-ZEITUNG" OF DECEMBER 1, "LILI" CHAIRMAN, 23-YEAR OLD PHILOSOPHY STUDENT REINHARD PITSCH, WAS SUBSEQUENTLY APPREHENDED IN AUSTRIA AND, ALTHOUGH REPORTEDLY NOT LEADER OF PALMERS KIDNAPPING, WAS ABLE TO GIVE POLICE IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT KIDNAPPING AND ITS PERPETRATORS. GRATT AND KEPLINGER WERE FREQUENT VISITORS OF BAADER-MEINHOF MEMBER WALTRAUD BOOCK IN VIENNA PRISON WHERE SHE IS INCARCERATED FOR BANK ROBBERY, BUT POLICE STATE MASTERMINDS BEHIND KIDNAPPING WERE FOUR FRG TERRORISTS, INGE VIETT, JULIANE PLAMBECK, GABRIELE ROLLNIK AND ONE YET UNIDENTIFIED MALE.

3. LEADERS OF ULTRA-LEFT ORGANIZATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH "LILI" GROUPING ASSERT THAT PERSONS INVOLVED IN KIDNAPPING HAD LONG AGO ISOLATED THEMSELVES FROM THEIR ORGANIZATIONS, AND ULTRA-LEFTISTS ARE NOW OTHERWISE TRYING TO KEEP FROM BEING TARRED BY ASSOCIATION. IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ADDITION, LEFTIST SOCIALIST PARTY MEMBER GUNNAR NENNING, EDITOR OF STATE-SUBSIDIZED ULTRA-LEFT MAGAZINE "NEUES FORUM" AND HOST OF CONTENTIOUS, LEFTIST AUSTRIAN TV TALK SHOW, "CLUB 2", HAS DISCLAIMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR TERRORISM BY PERSONS AMONB PERPETRATORS WITH WHOM HE HAS MAINTAINED CLOSE CONTACT.

4. IN NOVEMBER 30 DEBATE IN PARLIAMENT, LEADERS OF OPPOSITION PARTIES ATTACKED NENNING AS SPIRITUAL FATHER OF AUSTRIAN TERRORISTS AND SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT FOR SUBSIDIZING "NEUES FORUM" (IN WHICH SCHLEYER KIDNAPPING WAS DEFENDED) AS WELL AS FOR PROVIDING NENNING WITH TV FORUM WHILE FAILING TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE LEADERSHIP, TRAINING AND EQUIPMENT FOR AUSTRIAN SECURITY FORCES. OPPOSITION ALSO STRESSED NENNING'S CHAIRMANSHIP OF JOURNALISTS' SECTION OF UNION OF ARTISTS AND PROFESSIONAL PERSONS, WHICH IS AFFILIATED WITH SOCIALIST-LED AUSTRIAN FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS.

5. COMMENT: WHILE UNWINDING OF PALMERS CASE SEEMS EMBARRASSMENT TO BOTH GOA AND AUSTRIAN POLICE, WHO ARE ACCUSED OF FAILING TO FOLLOW UP LEADS AND MISJUDGING

POLITICAL NATURE OF CRIME, POLICE STATED CONFIDENTIALLY  
TO EMBOFF THAT THIS RESULTS FROM POLICE RUSE TO KEEP  
PALMERS CASE FROM DEVELOPING INTO POLITICAL CRISIS LIKE  
THAT OF SCHLEYER IN FRG. REPORT GOA PROMISED PARLIAMENT  
MAY SUSTAIN POLICE CLAIM. IN ANY CASE, ULTRA-LEFT IN  
AUSTRIA, MINISCULE AND DISCREDITED THOUGH IT ALREADY WAS,  
SEEMS TO BE IN EVEN WORSE SHAPE NOW.WOLF

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## Message Attributes

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